

points to be kept in view in the moral treatment of the insane. Nothing is better calculated to promote these ends than occupation in some useful employment which shall afford that amount of bodily exercise which is essential to the maintenance of the physical health, and at the same time give them the grateful consciousness that they are still capable of doing something useful."

"It would show a radical defect in the great system of hospital treatment of the insane, if it failed to make those who are its objects comfortable and contented with their lot; and no better proof could be furnished of its adaptation to the wants of the insane, than to see the inmates of such institutions satisfied with their condition, and preferring it even to remaining with their friends. That this is the case with a great majority of those who are thus provided for, I believe will be proved by the experience of all well conducted institutions of the kind. With the exception of a small number of patients, whose disease is manifested chiefly by an unhappy and discontented spirit which can be satisfied nowhere, the general feeling among the inmates of the asylum has been that of contentment and satisfaction. Those who have themselves experienced the benefits of hospital treatment can best appreciate them, and instances are by no means rare of patients who have been under the care of the asylum coming voluntarily to seek its assistance in a second attack."

It is believed that these voluntary returns are becoming frequent at most, if not all of our hospitals; and *voluntary first admissions* are not rare at some of them. P. E.

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ART. XIX.—*The Practice of Medicine and Surgery applied to the Diseases and Accidents incident to Women.* By WM. H. BYFORD, A. M., M. D., author of a "Treatise on the Chronic Inflammation and Displacements of the Unimpregnated Uterus," and Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children in the Chicago Medical College. 8vo. pp. 556. Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia, 1865.

WERE we to estimate the advance made in our knowledge of the pathology and therapeutics of the diseases and accidents peculiar to the human female, by the number of monographs and treatises devoted to their consideration, which have appeared within the few past years, we might reasonably infer, that the profession possessed a very intimate acquaintance with those diseases and accidents—their nature, seat, and causation, and with the means best adapted to allay the more painful and threatening of their symptoms, and to conduct most of them to a favourable termination.

That the maladies of women have been of late years studied to a greater extent and with more care than previously, and that, in consequence, our acquaintance with their pathology is more intimate and accurate, and our therapeutical management of them more rational and successful, is unquestionably true. It is, nevertheless, equally true, that many of the sexual diseases and accidents of women still remain involved in no little obscurity; that the more popular of the theories in regard to their pathology are unsatisfactory, while the means proposed for their amelioration or cure, are productive of comparatively little or no good. It is with pleasure, therefore, that we record the appearance of every new work on the diseases and accidents of women from an author of repute and experience, in the hope that from his observations and investigations some portion, at least, of our lack of knowledge in respect to those diseases and accidents may be supplied, and a greater unanimity arrived at as to their proper treatment.

The work of Dr. Byford is the latest that has appeared upon this subject. The author lays no pretension to entire originality, but presents the volume as "a concise, though sufficiently complete, practical, and reliable treatise," adapted to the wants of the student and junior members of the profession.

It comprises, certainly, a very fair *résumé* of the present condition of our knowledge on the subjects treated of in its several chapters. The author ad-

vances no particularly novel views, either pathological or therapeutical. He professes, however, to have tested the current opinions as to the nature and causation of the leading diseases and accidents peculiar to the female sex, and the means recommended for their amelioration or cure, by the results of his own extended observations and experience, and to have rejected all those which have not been sustained by such test. In this point of view, alone, the work is invested with no trifling interest, and will be received as a valuable addition to the standard works that form the basis of every physician's library.

In no department, perhaps, of medicine do we find so large a number of one-sided observations, and such an amount of false experience, as in that which embraces the especial diseases and accidents of the female sex. Some of the errors in pathology and practice which have in consequence resulted are pointed out by Dr. Byford; there are, we believe, many others which call as loudly for correction, and which have entirely escaped his scrutiny. The entire subject of displacements of the uterus requires, it is apparent, a more thorough and careful investigation than it has as yet received, in order to a more accurate determination of their true pathological signification, their frequency, the morbid phenomena to which they actually give rise, their causes, and the most appropriate means for their rectification; including, necessarily, a cautious and systematic examination into the value of pessaries, of the various forms and materials proposed by different practitioners, and the cases, if any, to which they are respectively adapted. The remarks of Dr. Byford on the use of the pessary are sufficiently cautious, and his enumeration of the circumstances under which its use is impracticable is sufficiently full; while his exposition of the evil effects caused by the abuse of the instrument would seem to be sufficiently pointed to deter all who shall carefully study it from an incautious and too frequent resort to them; nevertheless, he has not fairly met the main question, Do pessaries, the presence of which, confessedly, in many cases cannot be tolerated, and in others, from their improper use, are productive of serious mischief, effect in any case an amount of good, even when properly and skillfully employed, sufficient to counteract the dangers resulting from their abuse? We rather think that in his very limited commendation of pessaries, Dr. Byford has given in to the pressure of external authority on this question, rather than followed out the results of his own personal clinical experience.

The subject the most extensively discussed in the volume before us, is inflammation, acute and chronic, of the uterus and its appendages. Fourteen of the thirty chapters into which the treatise is divided are devoted to this subject alone. Inflammation, especially in its chronic form, constitutes the very basis of Dr. Byford's female pathology. Not only are the several groups of symptoms, which have been erected by the older writers, into independent diseases supposed to originate in uterine inflammation, but also nearly every ache and pain, every feeling of uneasiness to which woman is liable.

We have read the several chapters devoted to the history of inflammation of the womb and its annexes, its etiology, complications, progress, results, diagnosis, and treatment with deep interest. Though we believe that Dr. Byford has exaggerated the frequency of the occurrence of inflammation of the womb, and has laid it down as the cause of various morbid phenomena in cases in which it can exert no such agency, yet, with these exceptions, the subject has been unquestionably treated by him with much ability, and a careful study of this portion of his treatise will, we take pleasure to say, communicate much valuable practical information to "the student and junior practitioner."

Dr. Byford's account of puerperal fever is by no means very clear or satisfactory. He would seem to include under the term puerperal fever, every febrile affection of the recently delivered female, whether connected with inflammation of the womb, its sinuses, veins, etc., with utero or general peritonitis, or with toxæmia; the less or greater malignancy exhibited at different times by each of these forms of disease depending, as he believes, in great measure upon its occurring sporadically, or as the result of some endemic or epidemic cause.

With Dr. Byford we would willingly reject entirely the term puerperal fever

as one never strictly applicable to any of the diseases incident to the puerperal state, and from the loose manner in which it has been used, leading to the utmost confusion and the most serious errors in respect to the maladies liable to occur in child-bed. Confusion and errors which would be but little amended by adopting the term puerperal fever in only a generic sense, with a specific affix to define its meaning in the different cases to which it is applied.

We do not believe that all febrile affections occurring in puerperal females are identical, though we admit that they are all very greatly modified by the puerperal state, and, occasionally, by some prevailing epidemic or endemic influence. Our experience in conjunction with a pretty extended investigation of the subject has taught us that puerperal women are liable to a fever of the most formidable character, originating from a zymotic cause, traceable, in some instances, but not in others; a fever altogether independent, in every case, of inflammation, although such inflammation most generally occurs in the course of the disease as a secondary affection. This fever is a disease not peculiar to the puerperal female, but may occur also in the non-pregnant, the virgin, the male. It is propagatable by contagion or by infection, which latter will often adhere with great tenacity to the wards of a lying-in hospital, so as to propagate the disease to those who occupy them, even some time after they had been evacuated, and, apparently, thoroughly cleansed and aired.

That the disease just referred to, when it occurs in the recently delivered female, constitutes the most formidable of the febrile morbid conditions which have been included under the very loose term puerperal fever, can be established by an overwhelming mass of the most incontrovertible evidence.

Without formally recognizing the fact referred to, Dr. Byford, nevertheless, accedes to its correctness in his description of what he denominates the *toxæmic* form of puerperal fever. This description, although confused, and, in some respects, contradictory, has, in its general outlines, been very evidently drawn from the disease to which we refer as the most severe, unmanageable, and quickly fatal of the forms of fever, with which the puerperal female is liable to be attacked.

The chapters on uterine and ovarian tumors are marked by good sense and commendable caution. They embrace a tolerably clear and, though very concise, a fair exhibit of the present state of medical opinion in respect to the subjects treated of. The same may be said of the chapter on diseases of the mammae. The one on phlegmasia dolens, or crural phlebitis, is clear and accurate and highly instructive.

We would beg leave to remark that in the case of a new edition of the work of Dr. Byford being called for, and we see no reason to doubt that such will be the case, the Latinity of the several prescriptions given in it will require a careful revision. It is now, certainly, anything but correct. It is to be hoped, also, that the bad taste of combining in the same prescription Latin and English, will be avoided.

We have remarked that the name of Dr. Robert Lee, author of the well-known and highly valuable work, *Researches on the more Important Diseases of Women*, is invariably misspelled by Dr. Byford, *Hay*. D. F. C.

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ART. XX.—*Materia Medica for the Use of Students.* By JOHN B. BIDDLE, M. D., Professor of Materia Medica and General Therapeutics in the Jefferson Medical College, Member of the American Philosophical Society, Fellow of the College of Physicians, etc. etc. With illustrations. 8vo. pp. 359. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. 1865.

THIS is a second edition, revised, enlarged, and adapted to the last edition of the United States Pharmacopœia. The author does not design his work "to take the place of the more voluminous and systematic treatises upon the subject," but he believes, nevertheless, "that it will be found to contain a succinct